

UNDER A DARKENING SKY

torment from them, albeit I feel them still,
they bring me strength.' ¹

While staying at Pisa, Catherine for the first time saw the sea. On the island of Gorgona, some twenty miles from Livorno, there stood a Carthusian monastery, of which a certain Don Bartolommeo Serafini of Ravenna was then prior : a man of holy life and spiritual conversation, who believed profoundly in Catherine's mission, and was eager for the monks under his charge to hear her words. At his repeated instance, supported by Fra Raimondo, Catherine visited the island, with a number of her companions and friends from Pisa. They arrived at evening, and, while Raimondo and the others were entertained at the convent, the prior found rooms for Catherine and her women without. The next day, at the earnest prayer of the monks, Catherine spoke to them of the temptations of the monastic life and of its trials, in such a profound and illuminating fashion that all were amazed, and the prior, turning to Raimondo, declared that, if she had heard the confession of each (as he had done), she could not more appositely have healed the soul of every one. Bartolommeo himself bears witness to the great spiritual fruit that she wrought among them. He tells us how she left the island in the convent boat, and how, when they had reached the Pisan shore, the monks asked her blessing before rowing back, and believed that, through her intercession, they were miraculously delivered from a sudden storm that rose. He speaks, too, of her parting warning to him concerning a scandal which the devil would shortly try to cause in his flock, which was soon verified in the attempted suicide of a young monk, who was only liberated from temptation by the touch of the mantle that Catherine had left behind her, and by calling on her name.²

The simplicity with which Don Bartolommeo in his old age tells these stories is a revelation of the character of the man, and

¹ *LegettJa*, II. vi. 10, n (§§ 194-198). Cf. Lombardelli, *Sommaria delk disputa a difesa delle Sam Stimate di Santa Catenna*, p. 13.

² *LegnJa*, II. x. 20 (§ 296) ; *Contestatto Dom. Bartholomael de Ravenna, Processus*, coll. 1304-1307.